

P 241156Z JAN 01
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8802
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY ABUJA
AMEMBASSY BANGUI
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY KAMPALA
AMEMBASSY KIGALI
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000419

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/24/2010
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SUBJECT: KABILA LAID TO REST

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR WILLIAM LACY SWING FOR REASONS
1.5(B)(D)

11. (C) SUMMARY

IN A DIGNIFIED, WELL ORGANIZED SIX-HOUR CEREMONY, PRESIDENT LAURENT KABILA WAS BURIED JANUARY 23 IN THE PRESENCE OF SIX AFRICAN PRESIDENTS, AND NEARLY A DOZEN OTHER HIGH-LEVEL FOREIGN DELEGATIONS ALMOST ALL OF WHOM DEPARTED KINSHASA BEFORE NIGHTFALL. SECURITY WAS TIGHT AROUND THE NEW PRESIDENT, JOSEPH KABILA, WITH ANGOLAN AND ZIMBABWEAN REINFORCEMENTS FORMING ITS BACKBONE, AND, WHILE THERE WERE TENSE MOMENTS AMONG THE HUGE CROWD LINING THE STREETS, THERE WERE NO MAJOR INCIDENTS. OFFICIAL EULOGIES, OVERALL, WERE CONCILIATORY. AFTER THE FUNERAL, THE GOVERNMENT IMMEDIATELY BEGAN PREPARATIONS FOR THE INAUGURATION OF JOSEPH KABILA..
END SUMMARY.

12. (C) STRONG FOREIGN PARTICIPATION

SIX AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE ATTENDED THE FUNERAL SERVICE AT THE PALAIS DU PEUPLE AND BURIAL AT A NEW MAUSOLEUM IN FRONT OF THE PALAIS DE LA NATION. BESIDES THE DRC'S THREE SADC ALLIES -- DOS SANTOS OF ANGOLA, MUGABE OF ZIMBABWE, AND NUJOMA OF NAMIBIA -- ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT CHILUBA, AND THE SUDANESE AND MALAWIAN HEADS OF STATE ALSO ATTENDED.

OTHER DELEGATIONS INCLUDED: FORMER NIGERIAN HEAD OF STATE ABUBAKAR; THE VICE PRESIDENTS OF SOUTH AFRICA AND KENYA; BELGIAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER LOUIS MICHEL; AS WELL AS MINISTERIAL DELEGATIONS FROM GUINEA/CONAKRY; EQUATORIAL GUINEA; MOROCCO; TANZANIA; LIBYA; IRAN; CUBA; BENIN; CHAD; AND CONGO/BRAZZAVILLE; AND THE OAU DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL.

13. (S) SECURITY TIGHT

SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FUNERAL AND BURIAL WERE TIGHT. ANGOLA FLEW IN SEVERAL HUNDRED REINFORCEMENTS, INCLUDING A NUMBER OF THEIR OWN POLICE VEHICLES, AND ZIMBABWE MADE IMPRESSIVE FIGHTER PLANE FLYOVERS DURING POIGNANT MOMENTS, INCLUDING AT THE TIME KABILA'S BODY WAS PLACED IN A MARBLE MAUSOLEUM, HASTILY CONSTRUCTED IN THE DAYS SINCE HIS ASSASSINATION.

AT A RUMP SESSION OF WESTERN AMBASSADORS FOLLOWING THE FUNERAL AND BURIAL, THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR ASSERTED THAT, WITH VERY FEW EXCEPTIONS, BOTH THE CONGO'S RAPID INTERVENTION POLICE AND THE FAC MILITARY HAD BEEN DISARMED, PUTTING SECURITY AT PRESENT ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY IN THE HANDS OF THE ANGOLANS AND ZIMBABWEANS.

EMOTIONS WERE RUNNING HIGH THROUGHOUT THE DAY, CAUSING US AS WELL AS THE FRENCH AND SEVERAL OTHER EMBASSIES TO PUT OUT AN "ALL CALL" RADIO MESSAGE TO WARDENS AND OTHER CITIZENS TO STAY OFF THE STREET FOR THE REST OF THE DAY. SOME IN THE

CROWDS THICKLY LINING THE STREETS YELLED INSULTS AT DIPLOMATS AS THEIR CARS PASSED, AND THERE WERE ISOLATED INSTANCES OF STONES BEING THROWN AT DIPLOMATIC VEHICLES, INCLUDING THAT OF BELGIAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ON HIS WAY TO THE AIRPORT.

THERE WERE NO SERIOUS INCIDENTS, HOWEVER, AND NO ONE OF WHOM WE ARE AWARE WAS INJURED. IN GENERAL, SECURITY AUTHORITIES DID A COMMENDABLE JOB OF MAINTAINING ORDER, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE RECORD NUMBER OF PERSONS ON THE STREET. (IN CONTRAST TO THE FUNERAL AT THE "PALAIS DU PEUPLE", CROWDS WERE EXCLUDED FROM APPROACHING THE BURIAL SITE AT THE DOWNTOWN "PALAIS DE LA NATION".)

14. (S) EULOGIES TO A SLAIN LEADER

OVERALL, THE PUBLIC EULOGIES TO KABILA WERE CONCILIATORY AND FORWARD-LOOKING. THE MAJOR EXCEPTION WAS THAT OF THE "TRANSITIONAL PARLIAMENT" (ACL-PT) REPRESENTATIVE WHICH LARGELY REHASHED THE STANDARD FARE CONCERNING RWANDAN/UGANDAN AGGRESSION. MINISTER OF STATE KAKUDJI, WHILE BLAMING ALL OF THE CONGO'S CURRENT PROBLEMS ON THE WAR, DID ENDORSE A DIALOGUE AMONG THE CONGOLESE PEOPLE "ONCE ORDER HAS BEEN RESTORED." THE WAR, HE SAID, HAD "UNFORTUNATELY" RUINED THE PROSPECTS FOR KABILA'S PROGRAM OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS. HE RECEIVED LOUD APPLAUSE WHEN HE ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SPARE NO EFFORT IN CONDUCTING A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION OF THE ASSASSINATION, BUT NO APPLAUSE ON EITHER OF THE TWO OCCASIONS WHEN BE REFERRED TO JOSEPH KABILA AS THE NEW PRESIDENT. KAKUDJI CALLED ON MONUC TO DEPLOY AND FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ENSURE THAT THE UNSC RESOLUTIONS ARE IMPLEMENTED WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY.

THE CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP, CARDINAL ETSOU, MADE THE MOST THOUGHTFUL AND COURAGEOUS ELOCUTION OF THE DAY, CONDEMNING ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE IN PURSUIT OF, OR TO CONSERVE, POWER. HE URGED A SINCERE, FRANK DIALOGUE AMONG THE CONGOLESE PEOPLE "WITHOUT EXCLUSION," IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH A STATE OF LAW AND PROSPEROUS NATION, AND APPEALED TO ALL THE BELLIGERENTS TO END THE WAR.

15. (S) COMMENT:

WE, AND OUR DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES, CONTINUE TO BE IMPRESSED WITH THE SMOOTH, EFFICIENT MANNER IN WHICH THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT IS CONDUCTING THE AFFAIRS OF STATE, AT LEAST ON TECHNICAL MATTERS SUCH AS FUNERAL AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS. THEY ARE NOW BUSILY PREPARING THE INAUGURATION OF JOSEPH KABILA AS HIS FATHER'S SUCCESSOR.

SWING